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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF

Mrs. *A—a W—t.*

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SHEWING,

I. The unkind Uſage ſhe receiv'd from an only Brother.
II. The Cauſe of her coming to *London.*
III. The Manner in which ſhe was ſeduc'd from the Inn, to a Houſe of ill Fame.
IV. How ſhe was there male-treated, debauch'd, and confin'd for the Space of two Years.
V. Her Behaviour and Treatment there till the Time of her Deliverance, and how diſpos'd of ſince.

Under how hard a Fate are WOMEN *born!*
Priz'd, to their Ruin, or expos'd to Scorn:
If they want Beauty, *they of* Love *deſpair;*
But are beſieg'd like Frontier-Towns, if fair.
WALLER.

Learn to be wiſe, *from* others Harm,
And you ſhall do full well.
Old Ballad of the Lady's Fall.

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[Price One Shilling.]

To the right honourable and worſhipful the magiſtrates and gentlemen of the grand-juries of the cities of London and Weſtminſter, and within the liberties thereof.

GENTLEMEN,

IT is with great ſubmiſſion, though with ſome diffidence, that I venture to addreſs the following narrative to

to you: yet when I conſider the far greater number of your ſocieties are the maſters of families, and muſt naturally cheriſh a kind concern for the welfare of your poſterity, I am fully perſuaded you will pardon my preſumption; ſince it is impoſſible for any parent to caſt his eyes over this ſmall treatiſe, and ſeriouſly reflect upon the hard fate of the UNHAPPY ORPHAN, who is the ſubject of it, without ſorrow and indignation; more eſpecially, as no man can be certain but it may prove his own caſe.

What

What heart would not bleed to ſee a hopeful young creature deluded away from her parents or guardians, to be confin'd, ill-us'd, and proſtituted to the embraces of every laſcivious dotard or polluted rake, who have money enough to purchaſe her?

Theſe, gentlemen, are crimes that more immediately fall under your cognizance, whom providence has diſtinguiſh'd by the advantages of fortune and authority, to prevent to the utmoſt of your endeavours, and to puniſh as they deſerve.

That

That you all, therefore, may follow the laudable example of ſome of your brethren, and particularly exert yourſelves in the execution of this branch of your duty, are,

GENTLEMEN,

The hearty wiſhes of

Your moſt obedient,

And moſt humble ſervant,

The Author.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF

Mrs. *A—a W—t.*

AMONG the many ſcenes of villainy which have of late years been brought to light, I find none more extraordinary, or of a blacker dye, than this I am about to exhibit to public view. And although practices of the ſame nature may, perhaps, have been clandeſtinely carried on in moſt ages, yet to ſee them thrive and proſper, even in this city and ſuburbs, in ſpite of the moſt full and rigorous laws that were ever contriv'd againſt ſuch infamous de-

linquents, who continue to perpetrate them, is ſomewhat ſurprizing.

Many and various are the conjectures concerning the chief cauſe of ſuch neglect, ſome of them too ſhocking to mention, for which reaſon I hope they are falſe and groundleſs; nor ſhall I pretend to determine which is right, in ſo delicate a point.

Ruin! certain ruin is the conſequence, when young perſons are caught in theſe fatal ſnares! for by theſe wretches means they are led into the moſt deſtructive and pernicious meaſures, whereby they become infected with the poiſonous principles of the times, ſuffer all their former good qualities to be bore down the ſtream; and, at length, are ſwallow'd up in the gulph of atheiſm and prophaneneſs. Of which truth you have before you a late and living inſtance.

Belinda was born of honeſt and ſubſtantial parents, whoſe names and country I chuſe to conceal; not ſo much on account of her misfortunes, as for the great regard I bear to their memory. She was naturally witty, genteel, and agreeable; had an education ſuitable to her age, and ſtation in life; and, in all probability, would have been well ſettled in the world, according to her rank, had either of them liv'd till ſhe came to years of maturity. But, alas! the father being ſeiz'd with a malignant fever, was, in one night's time, depriv'd of his ſenſes, thereby render'd uncapable of making

making a will, and died delirious in leſs than a week after. The mother, inconſolable for her loſs, took the infection, and ſurviv'd her husband no more than ten days.

By this ſhocking and unexpected ſeries of of events, the unhappy Belinda, now ſcarcely twelve years old, was left to depend upon the care and curteſy of an extravagant heir, juſt come to age. She had not reſided with him much above fourteen months, before the young gentleman took notice that ſhe was apt to pry too narrowly into his inadvertencies. Hereupon, one evening after ſupper, he took it into his head to hint to her his intention of taking her to board at a gentleman's houſe, who had formerly married his father's ſiſter, under pretence that he would have a more watchful eye over her; but, in reality, that he might indulge his pleaſures with greater ſecrecy.

The better, and more plauſibly to carry on this deſign, he would often make her the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of brotherly love and affection, promiſe ſhe ſhould want for nothing ſhe could wiſh for or deſire, and that he would not fail to viſit her every week during her abſence. He likewiſe put her in mind of the many dangers her amiable qualifications might ſubject her to, when he was from home, which would frequently happen; and, though he had not the leaſt occaſion to ſuſpect her conduct, yet was it impoſſible for him not to entertain

ent rtain ſome concern for her future welfare: and if it ſhould fall out, continu'd he, that you ſhould place your affections upon ſome worthleſs object, which has been the fate of too many young people, it will create in me continual diſquiet and remorſe.

By theſe, and ſuch like artifices, he at length prevail'd upon her eaſy nature to leave him, though not without ſome inward compunction and apparent reluctance. Young as ſhe was, ſhe had foreſight enough to perceive his inevitable ruin, peeping from behind a black cloud of exigence and extortion; to her evident, but to him inviſible.

In the purſuit of pleaſure, we always run counter to our own intereſt. We are regardleſs of the turns and doublings of Fortune; and, whilſt we eagerly follow all the freſh game that ſtarts before us, we loſe ſight of that, which, had we taken care to ſecure, would have ſufficiently recompenc'd all our toil. When we are juſt ſetting out in the morning of life, we are apt to ſuffer ourſelves to be ſeduc'd by the firſt ſmooth tongu'd Syren we meet with, into the road of folly and extravagance, the end and puniſhment whereof is miſery and perdition; herein reſembling thoſe Indian birds which the ſailors call Boobies, who, wherever they light, there they continue as long as poſſible, and ſuffer themſelves to be taken, by any that will vouchſafe to lay their hands upon them.

Neceſſary

Neceſſary preparations were now making for Belinda's departure; and, when all was ready, ſhe was by her brother conducted in a very handſome manner to her new habitation, which ſtood about fifteen miles diſtant from that, which, while ſhe continu'd ſingle, might juſtly be call'd her own.

Her aunt had been dead ſome years, and her uncle married to a ſecond wife, by whom he had iſſue both male and female Scarce a month had expir'd before Belinda obſerv'd frequent animoſities ariſe between the children of different parents under the ſame roof, which gave her now and then a little uneaſineſs. However, as theſe diſtant relations behav'd to her with great kindneſs and civility, ſhe took no notice of this inconvenience, but ſtrove, as much as in her power lay, to reconcile the contending parties; for ſhe had ſo much prudence as not to join with either, and by this means incurr'd the diſpleaſure of none. Such diſcreet behaviour, in a perſon of her years, gain'd her the love and eſteem of the whole family, and ſhe ſoon became the admiration of all that knew her.

Her new guardians were never better pleas'd than when they could do any thing either to amuſe or divert her. She accompany'd them in all their viſits, to all their entertainments, and was made a party in all the innocent mirth which the country afforded. All the young miſſes thereabout came to ſee her, and were

were proud of her acquaintance; and she was look'd upon, by their parents, as the best pattern they could walk by: insomuch, as whenever they were guilty of any unbecoming or unseemly actions, they would instantly tell them, 'Miss W——t would not have done 'so, &c.' But notwithstanding all these encouragements, and the repeated endeavours of her friends to prevent it, they perceiv'd in her a melancholly turn of mind, and a sort of inward dissatisfaction. She lov'd to be alone, would often sigh, and excuse herself from making one in parties of pleasure; and, as though indispos'd, would retire to her chamber, devoting that solitary interval to reading and contemplation. The disorder increasing, her uncle began to be in pain, lest the consequence should prove fatal: to obviate which, he made frequent entertainments, inviting such persons only, in whose conversation he well knew she delighted; desiring them at the same time to examine her, and try if they could learn from her discourse the cause of her anxiety.

This stratagem was very far from answering the end propos'd. She would, indeed, be very gay and lively while the company continu'd with her; but they were no sooner gone, than the former symptoms of melancholly return'd. He therefore had recourse to another, and order'd his wife to examine her privately, that, if possible, he might come to the

the knowledge of this secret. For this good purpose, she would often break in upon her solitude, and use every artifice she was mistress of to make the discovery, but all her endeavours prov'd ineffectual. Hereupon the old gentleman, being greatly concern'd for her welfare, and having her interest at heart, came to her one evening as she was walking in the garden, and, in a kind and friendly manner, ask'd if she dislik'd her entertainment; told her, if she had any complaints to make they should be instantly redress'd, and begg'd of her at the same time to open her heart, and unbosom her grievances. He then laid before her the danger of indulging passions of this nature; and added, that she was too young to suffer any affliction to harbour in her tender breast, which was hard enough for age and experience to encounter with, and therefore hop'd she would conceal nothing, that gave her the least disturbance, from him.

The innocent orphan, who knew no guile, and was unpractis'd in the art of dissimulation, listen'd attentively to his intreaties, observ'd his fatherly affection for her, and at length burst into a flood of tears. For, as the ingenious Mr. Waller observes,

Even sorrow too, finds some relief
In tears, that wait upon our grief.

When she had abundantly pour'd forth her anguish, and was pretty well recover'd from

the

the crying fit, ſhe deſir'd her uncle to go into the parlour, and ſhe would ſatisfy him in every thing he requir'd. He, over-joy'd at this her wiſh'd-for reſolution, and not doubting but he ſhould ſoon be able to alleviate her ſorrow, ſeiz'd upon the preſent opportunity, and that moment walk'd forward towards the houſe. Belinda follow'd him; and, as ſoon as they enter'd the room, he lock'd the door, and ſeated himſelf by her, when ſhe declar'd her ſentiments in words to this effect: 'Sir, there are two things lie heavy at my 'heart; one of which is, that I much fear it 'will never be in my power to make you 'amends for the great care and kindneſs you 'have ſhewn to me ſince I firſt came into 'your family, and alſo for the many reſtleſs 'hours and melancholly thoughts I have coſt 'you. Were my circumſtances equal to my 'gratitude, you ſhould have no occaſion to 'repent of your friendſhip and humanity; 'but I, unhappy orphan! am left to the 'mercy of an inconſiderate brother, know not 'what I have to depend upon, and can't pre-'tend to ſay how it will fare with you upon 'that account. The other, ſir, is a matter of 'more importance to myſelf, as it is the only 'ſtanding rule by which I muſt regulate my 'future conduct. I live here in a ſtate of in-'dolence, go to bed, riſe, work and play, as 'beſt ſuits with my humour, but am entirely 'ignorant how I ſhall be enabled to ſupport

'myſelf

'myſelf in my preſent ſituation. My brother never made me but one promiſe; which 'was, that he would come and ſee me once a 'week, during my abode with you. It is 'now almoſt three months ſince, and I have 'neither ſaw him, or even heard any thing 'of him. Is not ſuch uſage enough to create 'in me jealouſies and fears? to fill my mind 'with diſmal apprehenſions and timerous de'ſpondencies? Can he ſo ſoon forget me, and 'I be ſo ſtupid as not to be ſenſible of a 'change of fortune, if not, which heaven 'avert! impending miſery? Under theſe 'preſſures, ſir, to perſuade me not to trouble 'myſelf with anxious thoughts, is to as little 'purpoſe, as to deſire me to open my eyes 'and ſee nothing. I ſhould be glad to know 'what I ſhall have to depend upon; and, as 'happineſs conſiſts in the moderation of our 'deſires, I ſhall endeavour to fit myſelf for 'that ſtation which falls to my lot, be it as 'it will.'

A melancholly remonſtrance this! ſeeing there is nothing more certain, than that thoſe who have enjoy'd an uninterrupted felicity are infinitely more ſenſible of adverſity, than others; as foreigners, who have liv'd long under the kind influence of a warm climate, can but ill diſpenſe with a cold one. But what is ſtill more extraordinary, ſhe ſeem'd herein to have had ſome faint ideas of her ap-

proaching misery; and has, in some circumstances, foretold her own fortune.

The uncle, pleas'd and surpriz'd to find under that air of youth a solid and serious sense of things conceal'd, remain'd silent for awhile, and then reply'd; 'I am extreamly 'oblig'd to you, cousin, for thus freely com-'municating the cause of your uneasiness, both 'for my own sake, and yours. What gives 'me greater pleasure, is, I am pretty confi-'dent I shall soon be able to remove all these 'obstacles to your happiness. As to what 'concerns me, give yourself no pain about it; 'your brother and I have agreed upon every 'thing, relating to that affair. Whatever 'you want let me know, and your wants 'shall be supply'd. As to what more imme-'diately concerns yourself, I will take care to 'talk with my cousin about it in a few days, 'and have all matters settled upon a sure 'foundation; therefore make yourself easy, 'all my house affords is at your service, and 'every body loves you.' Thus they parted, for the present: he, about his necessary avocations; she, to her apartment.

Next morning Belinda, having discharg'd that load of anguish which had so long depress'd her spirits, and procur'd a good night's rest, came down to breakfast with the family, appearing full of mirth, and altogether a new creature. When tea was over, she return'd to

her chamber, dreſs'd herſelf, and went to dine with one of her favourite companions; who, perceiving a ſtrange alteration in her countenance and complexion, ſaid, 'Well, 'miſs! I never ſaw any body ſo much chang'd 'for the better, in ſo little a time, as you 'are. It is not above a week or ten days 'ſince I ſaw you laſt, and I declare I can 'ſcarcely ſay you are the ſame perſon. What 'have you done to yourſelf? teach me your 'art? I was always apt to envy your fine 'features, but never ſaw you look ſo charm-'ing before. If I was a young gentleman, I 'ſhould certainly fall in love with you. We 'greatly fear'd you was going into a conſump-'tion a little while ago, but now I'm con-'vinc'd there is no danger of it. I'll ſend for 'my couſin Sally, and deſire her to bring 'miſs White with her, that we may ſpend 'the evening merrily together, for you know 'two are no company. Its my opinion they 'won't know you.'

Belinda, whoſe early genius began to revive and ſparkle, being pretty well acquainted with the nature of her own conſtitution, after a ſhort pauſe, made her this anſwer: 'We 'young girls, miſs, are very delicate pieces of 'mechaniſm, the leaſt rough blaſt or rude 'touch puts the whole out of order. This 'morning I go to my glaſs, and am frighted 'at my own reſemblance, I look ſo pale and 'languid. The next day, perhaps, I'm as

'freſh

'freſh as a roſe, all life, full of ſpirits, vigo-
'rous and blooming. I don't pretend to ac-
'count for theſe ſudden changes in our coun-
'tenances, but have often obſerv'd they work
'different effects upon our paſſions. In the
'firſt caſe, I am generally inclin'd to melan-
'cholly, ſolitude and devotion: in the latter,
'to mirth, gaiety and good company; there-
'fore am determin'd to enjoy myſelf while I
'may, and am pleas'd you have ſent for
'more.'

Never did a party of young people ſpend an evening more innocently and agreeably. They danc'd, they ſung, they play'd; and Belinda ſaid ſo many pretty things, that all the company beheld her with pleaſure, and paid her the greateſt attention; for ſhe had the happineſs never to ſeem conſcious of any perfection, or of exerting it to any extream degree.

Amidſt the reſt of their diſcourſe, as is common among young damſels of their age, ſhe told them her dream; which, indeed, if we may be allow'd to apply to her brother's misfortunes and her own, was really ominous. For this reaſon, though I have no notion of ſuch idle tales, and look upon them to be no more than the irregular productions, or inconſiſtent ideas of a diſtemper'd mind, yet will I venture to relate it. 'I dream'd, ſaid ſhe, that I was 'walking by myſelf, one fine ſummer even-'ing, in my brother's garden, and ſaw two

'pigeons

'pigeons come flying haſtily over the houſe, 'a hawk eagerly purſuing. One of them, 'methought, was grey and white; the other, 'all over white as ſnow. I look'd ſtedfaſtly 'at them; and, when they were at a conſi-'derable diſtance from me, they ſeparated, 'the hawk following the party-colour'd one 'till out of my ſight. In the mean time, I 'perceiv'd the other coming directly back, as 'if in much confuſion, and enter a neighbour's 'barn, in the ſame village, to hide herſelf. 'Well pleas'd with her eſcape, I kept my 'eye upon the place, and ſaw an owl come 'inſtantly out at it. In leſs than a quarter of 'an hour after, the poor pigeon, as I thought, 'being recover'd from her fright, came out 'alſo; and, mounting up into the air, took a 'large circuit round, then made off. Preſent-'ly after her companion return'd, but ſeem'd 'to ſteer a different courſe. While I was 'conſidering with myſelf, whether they would 'ever meet together again, methought I ſaw 'two monſtrous ugly creatures perch upon 'the ridge of the houſe, between two ſtacks 'of chimnies. They had faces reſembling ours, 'ſharp hooked bills, dark-colour'd wings, 'long talons, and red breaſts. Trembling, 'and very much ſurpriz'd, I thought I ran to 'tell my brother what I had ſeen, which 'wak'd me.'

All, in their turns, paſs'd their judgements upon this important affair. One was poſitive

it

it portended good fortune in marriage, becauſe the dove was a bird dedicated to the goddeſs of Love. Another, ſaid ſhe did not like it. A third inſiſted that it was a very bad dream. This controverſy over, they all return'd to their own habitations.

None of theſe far-fetch'd conjectures wrought the leaſt effect upon Belinda; ſhe only laugh'd at their ſuperſtitious fears, and continu'd in a perfect ſtate of tranquillity, entirely eaſy, and well ſatisfy'd with her ſtation. When ſhe did not employ herſelf about her own buſineſs, ſhe generally walk'd abroad to ſome of her acquaintance, who frequently return'd the viſits: and ſhe would often go to the neighbouring market with her aunt or the maid, to ſee them diſpoſe of the produce of their farm, and to learn experience in country affairs.

The uncle, perceiving in her this unexpected turn of mind, told her, he would defer going to her brother's, till there was half a year's pay due for her board; to which ſhe readily conſented, ſaying, he very likely might come to ſee her before that time, and ſave him the trouble.

The market-town was but little above two miles diſtant from them, at which there was a noted fair for cattle every May-day. Hither numbers of young people reſorted, either to meet, or to ſeek their ſweethearts, and this day was eſteem'd among them the greateſt holiday in the year.

Belinda and her playfellows had agreed between themſelves, a good while before the time came, to go to the fair, and ſhe had invited them to take a breakfaſt with her before they ſet out. Having prepar'd all things ready to receive them in her own chamber, ſhe began to dreſs, and to fit herſelf out to as much advantage as ſhe was able: though ſhe did not ſeem to ſtand in need of any aſſiſtance from art, for ſhe was naturally tall, conſidering her age, which occaſion'd many to think ſhe might be a year or two older than ſhe really was. Her face was oval, her forehead high, her eyes large and ſparkling, her teeth white and finely ſet, her complexion fair, her cheeks juſt ting'd with vermillion, and her ſhape exact and eaſy. In ſhort, all her features had the trueſt ſymmetry and proportion; which, with the addition of good attire, render'd her charms almoſt irreſiſtible.

Breakfaſt over, ſhe, with three of her companions and her uncle's eldeſt daughter, all much of the ſame age, ſet out for the fair. They all being born near the place, and their parents well known, had their ſeveral young ſparks to attend upon and treat them; while Belinda, on account of her being a ſtranger, remain'd only without a gallant. However, they had the good manners to inſiſt upon her company wherever they went.

Towards the evening, as they were traverſing the ſtreets to purchaſe baubles to carry home,

home, a youth about twenty caſt his eyes on the beautiful ſtranger, and ſeem'd greatly enamour'd with her. He inſiſted ſhe ſhould go and drink with him, and bring her companions with her. She refus'd for awhile; but the reſt, well pleas'd with the event, ſeconded his intreaties, and prevail'd. Hereupon they all went to the beſt inn in the town, where they were ſhewn a room large enough to accommodate them.

The new captive led his miſtreſs in firſt, and the others follow'd in order. When they were enter'd he ſaluted her, ſet her down in a chair, and plac'd himſelf by her, asking what ſhe would pleaſe to drink. One of the company anſwering, cyder, he call'd for two bottles and a plate of cakes, then enquir'd where ſhe liv'd, and what her name was; of which being inform'd, he determin'd to wait upon her home.

For this purpoſe, as ſoon as he had drank her health, he went to give the hoſtler charge of his horſe. In his abſence they all wiſh'd Belinda joy, and ſpoke much in praiſe of her lover; ſaying, they had never ſeen him before, but he was a well-behav'd, pretty young man, &c. and ask'd how ſhe lik'd him. Belinda never had a ſweetheart before, and was quite confounded at the queſtion; but bluſhing anſwer'd, ſhe ſuppos'd ſhe ſhould ſee no more of him.

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She had ſcarce done ſpeaking when Damon, for ſo I ſhall call him, return'd; bringing in his hand a fan, which he preſented to her for a fairing. Here again the young laſs was at a loſs how to behave. She thought if ſhe accepted of it, it would lay her under ſome obligation; and if ſhe refus'd, it would ſavour of pride or ill-manners: but having obſerv'd the other young men make her acquaintance preſents of the ſame nature, ſhe roſe, took it of him, made a curtſey, and return'd him thanks. He ſaluted her again, and ſaid, 'I'm 'ſorry, miſs, the town would afford no bet-'ter; nevertheleſs, as you have condeſcended 'to accept it, I ſhall ever think the better of 'my fancy. I only beg that you will keep 'it as long as poſſible, for my ſake.'

They made an end of the liquor, paid the reckoning, and came homeward together, equally delighted. When they came near the houſe, the uncle's daughter and her partner ſtepp'd on before, to tell her mother they were all coming, and that her couſin had brought a ſweetheart with her.

The old gentlewoman, expecting Belinda's playfellows would accompany her home, had provided a ſupper for them, and put the parlour in order: but what gave her the greateſt pleaſure, was, to hear that her couſin had got a lover by the bargain; who, as ſhe imagin'd, would infallibly cure her melancholly diſorder.

No ſooner were they enter'd, than Damon, the only ſtranger, paid his compliments to the old gentlewoman; ask'd pardon for intruding upon her in ſo rough a manner; ſaid, it was intirely owing to her niece, whom it was not in his power to leave, till he had conducted her ſafe home. The old lady ſmil'd, bid him welcome; and added, ſhe had a bed at his ſervice. This unexpected and kind anſwer was very agreeable to Damon's inclinations, and the language of Belinda's eyes ſeem'd expreſſive of her approbation.

During ſupper, thoſe dumb interpreters play'd alternately at each other, and ſometimes met, emitting ſubtle ſpirits, which paſs'd imperceptibly to the heart, and caus'd an unuſual warmth to ariſe in their cheeks. The aunt, perceiving them both to be often out of countenance, and altogether unacquainted with the buſineſs they were about, willing to encourage their amours, propos'd to ſend for a fidler; ſaying, they might dance till her husband came from the fair, which ſhe knew would not happen till very late, and by which time they would be all weary, and willing to go to reſt. They unanimouſly agreed to the propoſal; and, as ſoon as the fidler came, began their evening's diverſion.

A little after eleven the good man came home. The wife could ſcarce give him time to ſit down, before ſhe told him what a pretty young man was come to court Belinda. He

enquir'd

enquir'd who he was? being told ſhe knew nothing of him; he anſwer'd, but I'll know, before he goes to bed in my houſe. I love my couſin too well, to let any young rake impoſe upon her. She's a ſober, good girl, and deſerves a good husband. I'll inſtantly go and examine him.

Damon was the only ſon of a wealthy grazier; who, at certain times, frequented this market to buy beaſts and ſheep, and very rarely miſs'd coming to the fair, and the old gentleman had that very day ſold him four oxen. He no ſooner enter'd the parlour, than he became perfectly acquainted with the ſon. All his wrath and indignation was ſoon turn'd to civility and complaiſance. He would hear no apologies made, but ſaid he was very glad to ſee him, and would not ſtay to hinder their paſtime; accordingly he went to bed, and left his wife to take care of them.

Between twelve and one o'clock in the morning, they all retir'd to their ſeveral apartments. Damon tarry'd till his miſtreſs aroſe; and, having taken a formal leave, promiſing to wait upon her again in about a week or ten days, return'd home.

Where ſuch a mutual and paſſionate flame is thus firſt lighted up in the minds of young people, before they are practis'd in the art of deluſion, or ſway'd by the biaſs of intereſt, it creates a reciprocal eſteem, which enters into their very ſouls, and is not eaſily eradicated.

As

As ſoon as our young lover's back was turn'd, the old people examin'd Belinda concerning his behaviour, and her own inclinations; caution'd her againſt ſuffering him to offer any indecency, or uncommon freedom; telling her, at the ſame time, that ſhe was too young to think of immediate marriage, and yet it would be prudence in her to give him encouragement, for his father was in very good circumſtances, but they believ'd would not allow his ſon to marry unleſs he brought with him a fortune agreeable, becauſe he had a ſiſter to be provided for: however, they thought her brother was in duty bound to give her five hundred pounds; which they knew not, conſidering her perſonal qualifications, but might be accepted, and at a proper time that affair ſhould be ſettled to her mind, heartily wiſhing ſhe might diſpoſe of it ſo well.

Belinda, who indeed had the advantages of a handſome perſon; and, with reſpect of years, ſeem'd ſo well qualify'd, as to have little more to do, than to purſue the advice of Juan de Vega, *Poneroſe de buen aire a la puerta de la Fortuna*; 'To place herſelf 'with a good air at the door of Fortune;' told them, ſhe did not entertain the moſt diſtant thoughts of matrimony at preſent; all ſhe propos'd by his company, was to appear like the reſt of the young girls, and to enhance their innocent diverſion, by the addition of

of another couple; that he appear'd more decent and reſerv'd than any one of his ſex among them; and, as to his perſon, it was agreeable enough; but, the holiday now over, all the incidents that attended were by her intirely forgotten, and it would not give her the leaſt uneaſineſs if ſhe never ſet eyes on him more.

This day and the next ſhe ſpent in her own apartment, in repairing and putting in order ſuch of her apparel as had been any way incommoded by her late agitation. The next ſhe paid a viſit to miſs White, where the whole evening's converſation turn'd upon Damon. Miſs inſiſted that her dream was now made out; that ſhe was the white pigeon, and Damon the party-colour'd one; that they came together to her uncle's, and there parted, but only to meet again. All the other ſtuff was of no ſignification. 'He ſeem'd, miſs, continu'd ſhe, 'over head and ears in love 'with you. I wonder how he got home. I 'never ſaw a young man in a more dangerous 'way in my life. Did you not obſerve his 'colour come and go twenty times in an 'hour? Pray how did he part with you?'

The name of the perſon belov'd has generally a ſecret magical operation. It is no ſooner pronounc'd, but it ſtartles. We are apt to repeat it to ourſelves, and form a picture out of it in an inſtant. But Belinda remain'd unmov'd, appear'd eaſy and entirely indifferent

different at what ſhe ſaid, and ſtood impregnable againſt all the efforts of her tongue. Whether this inſenſibility proceeded from the coldneſs of her conſtitution, or an over-affected ſelf-denial, is very difficult to determine. Her ſubſequent behaviour, during the time ſhe continu'd in this country, and afterwards, ſeems to plead in favour of the latter; by which miſtake, ſhe forfeited that advantage which is commonly found in the commerce of retribution.

Damon, on the contrary, was touch'd to the quick, frequently repeated his viſits, and could conceive no other joy or felicity, but what aroſe from her company and converſation.

Like travellers, by light'ning kill'd,
He burnt, the moment he beheld.
To what his eyes admir'd before,
He adds a thouſand graces more;
And fancy blows into a flame,
The ſpark that from her beauty came.
The object, thus improv'd by thought,
By his own image he was caught:
Pygmalion ſo, with fatal art,
Poliſh'd the form that ſtung his heart.

Lord Lanſdowne.

As it often happens in other things, ſo it happens in love-affairs; when our hopes are at

at the higheſt, they meet with unexpected croſs accidents, and have the greateſt fall. Thus it far'd with Damon and Belinda.

The uncle now ſet forward to pay a viſit to her brother, who was left in poſſeſſion of near two hundred pounds per Annum, half of it well ſtock'd. On his arrival, he found him from home; but was not in the leaſt diſſatisfy'd with this event, as it gave him a fair opportunity of looking over the eſtate, and examining into his conduct. After he had refreſh'd himſelf, he took his horſe and rode over the fields belonging to his nephew, which he obſerv'd were entirely ſtripp'd of all the ſaleable timber; then returning to the houſe, he enquir'd of the ſervants what time they thought their maſter would be at home, and was anſwer'd about twelve or one o'clock. He then order'd them to get his bed ready, and he would go and ſpend the evening with a farmer in the village, who was an intimate acquaintance of his brother-in-law's, and would be glad to ſee him.

The farmer receiv'd him kindly, and inſtantly took him into a private room, ſaying, he had ſomething of importance to communicate. They were no ſooner ſeated, than the uncle began his enquiries. The farmer anſwer'd with a ſigh, 'Ah! ſir, our old neighbour and 'friend is gone; and we have juſt reaſon to 'aſſert the truth of the ancient proverb, 'namely, When the old one is gone, there 'ſeldom

'ſeldom comes a better. He took care of 'his family-affairs, viſited his neighbours, and 'made his buſineſs a pleaſure; but, alas! his 'ſucceſſor makes pleaſure his buſineſs. He is 'to us a perfect ſtranger; we do not ſet eyes 'on him once in a month. His chief ſtudy 'is how to ſpend his time moſt agreeable to 'his own inclination. Hunting-matches, horſe-'races and cockings, are his favourite diver-'ſions. Your good brother has not been 'dead above two years, though the heir has 'made ſuch ſad havock upon the eſtate: nay, 'I was told laſt week at market, that he has 'mortgag'd one part of it for four or five 'hundred pounds. He did well, indeed, to 'ſell off the ſtock, and lett out the Hall-'farm, which otherwiſe would have been 'eaten up by ſervants. He now keeps only 'three ſaddle-horſes, and thoſe very well. 'But we are all here in pain for miſs. I wiſh 'you could perſuade him to ſettle a fortune 'upon her, before the eſtate is alienated; for 'it can't laſt long after the rate he goes on, 'and 'tis pity the poor innocent child ſhould 'be made a beggar by his extravagance, or 'ſuffer for another's folly. It is very ſur-'prizing to me, that a young man of his 'ſenſe and learning, whoſe converſation is ſo 'much eſteem'd by all the gentry round 'about, ſhould act ſo imprudently.'

This melancholly account of the nephew's oeconomy, gave the uncle great uneaſineſs; who

who told his friend what happen'd to Belinda, and that he did not doubt of making up the match in a little time, on condition he could prevail with the brother to give her a fortune. Hereupon, they both agreed to meet and attack him about it the next day. He came home before twelve, and roſe early next morning to welcome his gueſt. The moment he ſaw him, he began to enquire of his ſiſter's health, and of all the family; then inſiſted upon his ſtaying another night, and ſaid he would ſend for his old acquaintance to dine with them. Pleas'd with this propoſal, the uncle conſented, after a ſeeming heſitation. The farmer was ſent for immediately, and promis'd to wait upon them at the time appointed. In the interim, the uncle and nephew walk'd out, and talk'd over different affairs with uſual friendſhip and familiarity, but not a word was mention'd concerning Damon. Sometime after dinner, when the glaſs had paſs'd briskly about, the farmer bluntly ask'd our young rambler when he would think of ſettling; for, ſaid he, we ſhall never have any of his company till he get himſelf a wife. He frankly anſwered, that he was now in purſuit of a fortune, and had hopes of ſucceſs; which oblig'd him to keep late hours, and was the only occaſion of that conduct which he knew the neighbours found fault with.

There are a thouſand roads which lead to Fortune's palace, but it is extremely hard to know them ſo well, as to be able to travel with certainty. We ſometimes think ourſelves right, when moſt out of the way; and as often think ourſelves loſt, when at our journey's end. The former of theſe was the caſe of our young ſpark. For tho' we live in an age which generally meaſures the merit of a man by his horſes, or dreſs; and, for this reaſon, ſome are ſo ſilly to feed them well, and ſtarve themſelves at home, in order to parade it abroad: yet is this a monſtrous folly, by which, perhaps, they may deceive ſtrangers, but muſt never expect it will paſs current among their neighbours or acquaintance. Our neceſſities ſhould be firſt provided for, before we venture to paſs to ſuperfluities, leſt we be tempted to play the knave, in order to ſupport the outſide of an honeſt man.

The grand affair, with regard to Belinda's fortune, came next to be conſider'd. Long were the debates, and ſtrenuous the arguments on this important ſubject, which was to determine her future happineſs or miſery. They urg'd her preſent offer, that an opportunity ſo fair and promiſing might never happen again, therefore ought not to be overlook'd. But the brother was deaf to all their entreaties, and poſitively determin'd not to comply; inſiſting ſhe was much too young to think

think of matrimony; that it was time enough for her to be diſpoſed of, when he was ſettled, and could pay her portion out of that he receiv'd. This diſcourſe held them up late; but, finding all their endeavours vain and fruitleſs, they broke up the converſation, and ſought their repoſe.

Next morning the young gentleman and his uncle roſe early, and ſettled the account. He paid his ſiſter's bills and her half year's board, and ſent two guineas for her pocket, with his kind love; at the ſame time told his uncle, as he now knew the occaſion of his not coming to ſee her, he hop'd ſhe would excuſe it, and deſir'd him to let her want for nothing. A comfortable meſſage this! had it been really ſpoken from the heart, and conformable to truth. But he kept a favourite miſtreſs in the houſe, who engroſſed all his affections, whom he had ſecreted from the ſight of his uncle, and who was not known in the neighbourhood. It was at her inſtigation he refus'd to pay the fortune, and ſhe took all opportunities of making her own advantage of her gallant's foible, having already brought it ſo about as to make him ſacrifice his own ſiſter to her intereſt.

When a man has given his heart to a Phillis, he is certainly in the wrong to let her command his purſe. Is not this, to invert the order of nature? In matter of ſervice the ſervant ought to be paid, and not the miſtreſs.

But

But the majority of women, if not all of this kind, have ever lik'd better to ſee money paid, than compliments, and this wicked cuſtom ſtill prevails. Ceremonies and good grace, are coins that do not paſs now-a-days with ladies for ready money.

But to purſue the thread of our narration. The uncle returns home. Belinda runs to meet him, to be inform'd of her brother's welfare, and his ſucceſs with regard to her. He firſt deliver'd the preſent, and then being himſelf impos'd upon, related to her the ſame plauſible ſtory as was told him by the nephew; and, that he might not give her the leaſt diſcouragement, he embelliſh'd it with all the moſt pleaſing and tender circumſtances that occurr'd to his invention. The poor girl was ſo tranſported to hear ſhe ſhould ſoon have a new ſiſter, and was to go to her brother's wedding, that ſhe ſeem'd to forget ſhe had any ſuch affair of her own in hand. However, Damon, in a very few days after, took care to put her in mind of it. He was ſtabb'd to the heart. Nothing ſuſpended his activity. He ſaw her in all places; he adored her, and purſued her without intermiſſion. Nay, more; love had inſpir'd him with freſh courage, and enabled him to communicate the whole affair to his father. The old gentleman, having no other ſon, was very fond of him; and, though he did not immediately diſapprove his choice, or blame his precipitancy, yet did he look

look upon it as a raſh and inconſiderate enterprize, was determin'd to ſtop all farther proceedings, and in ſuch manner as his heir ſhould not be aware of the deſign. In order to effect this, he kept him employ'd about his own buſineſs, and under his eye, for ſome time, feeding him up with hopes, that when harveſt was over, and he had leiſure, they would both go together to ſee Belinda; that he would then talk with her friends, and put matters upon a right footing. He compar'd theſe hot fits of youthful lovers to a flaſh of lightning, which was generally very violent, but of ſhort duration; and doubted not but abſence, and freſh objects, would ſoon make him forget this firſt idol of his affections. By theſe fair promiſes, and other neceſſary avocations, our young lover recover'd his former ſenſes, awak'd from the gaudy dream, and became a new man.

During Damon's abſence, which wrought much the ſame effect upon Belinda, her uncle dies; and, from this period, we may date the Æra of her misfortunes. He left behind him a large family; conſiſting, as is before obſerv'd, of the children of two mothers, who were now arriv'd to years of maturity, and were continually at variance, concerning their ſeveral and reſpective claims; inſomuch, that Belinda, weary of noiſe, and finding herſelf not ſo well reſpected as before, return'd to her brother, told him what had happen'd,

and

and that ſhe could not continue there any longer. 'Nor can you ſtay long her, ſaid 'he, inſtantly. Your company will diſcon-'cert all my meaſures. Can you imagine my 'intended ſpouſe, will ever be prevail'd upon 'to come hither, to be inſulted by a ſiſter? 'You muſt think of diſpoſing of yourſelf 'ſome other way, and that ſoon, or you will 'do me infinite prejudice.' This cold and unkind reception from an only brother, whom ſhe had not ſeen for above nine months, recall'd to her mind all thoſe evils ſhe formerly dreaded. However, ſhe ſtemm'd the tide of affliction with uncommon reſolution, and bore up againſt all his taunts with ſurprizing intrepidity; telling him, if he would be ſo good as to let her ſtay about a month to put herſelf in order, ſhe would endeavour, with his aſſiſtance, to remove far enough, ſince the very ſight of her was ſo offenſive. Shock'd at this anſwer, ſo agreeable and unexpected, he altered his manner of treating her; ſaid, ſhe ſhould be welcome for that time, or longer, if ſhe pleaſed, and he would do for her what ſhe requeſted, as far as his circumſtances would at preſent allow.

Early next morning, long before Belinda was awake, the favourite miſtreſs was carried off, and ſhe reign'd in her ſtead, during her abode at the brother's houſe, which did not exceed a month, being determin'd to come to London at all events, as ſoon as ſhe had fitted

fitted herſelf out for the journey, and he could advance her ten or fifteen guineas. She made known her reſolution the very next day, which gave him no ſmall pleaſure: nor did he fail to aſſiſt and encourage her in the proſecution of it. In this ſhort time ſhe ſaw enough to make her ſick of the place, and heard enough to convince her there would ſoon be nothing left to ſupport either of them, therefore reſolv'd to uſe her utmoſt endeavours to provide for herſelf in the beſt manner ſhe could.

The fatal day for her departure now drawing near, he ask'd her what money ſhe thought would be ſufficient for her purpoſe: ſhe anſwer'd fifty pounds; imagining that ſum would put her into ſome way of buſineſs, by which ſhe might get a livelihood; and rent-day being but lately elaps'd, ſhe did not know but he might advance that ſum to get quit of her for ever. Vain hopes theſe! taxes, repairs, intereſt-money, and bills due, had ſo far eat into his half year's rent as to reduce the overplus to ſixteen pounds; ſcarce enough to ſupply his extravagance for a fortnight. Hereupon he told her that it was not in his power to grant her requeſt; that he could not poſſibly ſpare more than ten pounds at preſent; but, to haſten her abſence, he ſaid he would add to it a ſilver tea-pot, two tea-ſpoons, two large ſpoons, and a ring of her mother's; alſo promis'd to remit the other forty pounds the

Lady-day

Lady-day following. Belinda accepted of this ſmall pittance, ſent her clothes, and other neceſſaries, to the carrier's that evening, and met the waggon on the road the next day, about eight miles from her brother's houſe; into which he put her, took his laſt farewel, and return'd home, where I ſhall leave him to reap the fruits of his folly and unnatural diſpoſition.

Belinda, though but juſt turn'd of fourteen when ſhe undertook this journey, had no ſooner recover'd from that uſual anxiety which naturally ariſes in our minds when we part with our friends, or abandon the place of our birth, began to conſider how to diſpoſe of her little fortune to the beſt advantage. She had never before been near London, nor had perſonal knowledge of any creature there. Her credentials conſiſted only in two letters: one from her brother, to a relation near Groſvenor-Square; the other from the old farmer before-mention'd, to his wife's ſiſter, who was well married to a tradeſman in Holborn; upon whoſe advice ſhe was determin'd to rely, and at whoſe houſe ſhe propos'd to reſide, till ſhe could procure a ſuitable ſervice, or get into ſome buſineſs, as ſhe could work at her needle extremely well.

There was another country laſs in the waggon, ſeveral years older than miſs, who, on ſome diſappointment in love-matters, had accompany'd her all the way, and was come

up

up to get into place. They were bedfellows on the road; and, coming when dark to the inn, had agreed to lie there together that night, accordingly order'd ſupper and their boxes to be brought into their own room, which the elder of them took the charge of below.

After ſupper, as they were ſitting by the fire, and conſulting how to find out their friends in the morning, the chamberlain knock'd at the door, which they open'd. He entering, told them, there was two ladies and a footman at the bottom of the ſtairs, who came to enquire for country ſervant-maids, and if either of them was deſign'd for that employment, he would bring them up; and believed, by their appearance, they were perſons of worth. The eldeſt, tranſported at this lucky incident, immediately conſented to their admiſſion, nor was miſs much leſs delighted. The ladies were introduced, the footman in a fine lac'd livery attending; who was inſtantly order'd to ſend up a bottle of white wine, and to wait in the taphouſe till called for. They now begin to examine the innocent girls concerning their country, their age, relations, and abilities. The eldeſt ſaid ſhe had a father alive; but, on his bringing a ſtep-mother home, ſhe was turn'd out to ſervice, and had been in different places five or ſix years, was uſed to all ſorts of work in the country; that ſhe could ſew well enough

to ſerve her own turn, but would not pretend to do fine work, and therefore came to look out for ſome chambermaid's place in ſome family, being reſolv'd not to go into any publick Houſe. The poor orphan tells her melancholy ſtory next, with all the inhuman circumſtances attending it; and enough, one would think, to melt the moſt obdurate heart to compaſſion: which, when ſhe had finiſh'd, ſighing ſaid, I have nothing but my needle to truſt to, and unleſs I ſhould be ſo happy as to find out ſome gentlewoman of fortune, or lady to wait upon, I dare undertake no ſervice, never being uſed to any drudgery.

The pretended ladies remain'd ſilent for a conſiderable time; at length, one looking wiſhly at the other, ſaid, 'Madam! I really 'believe we are both fitted, if we can but 'agree about wages.' The eldeſt and her miſtreſs ſoon ſtruck up a bargain; but Belinda deſir'd to have a little time to conſider of it, and that ſhe might conſult with her friend in Holborn before ſhe came to a reſolution what to do.

The ladies inſiſted upon their going with them that very night; and, upon that condition, promis'd to diſcharge the reckoning, rather than be at the expence of ſending ſervants and coaches the next day, which would be a double charge to both, as they liv'd at different ends of the town. They told

told her farther, that as her companion was to leave her, it would be loneſome and dangerous for her to lie by herſelf in the inn. 'You are low ſpirited, child; don't be afraid. 'You will have nothing to do but to dreſs 'me, and get up my fine linnen. Why 'ſhould you caſt yourſelf down, and ſigh 'ſo? Come, we'll have t'other bottle, and by 'the ſtrength of that, I hope, my dear, 'you'll hear reaſon.' The bottle came, and the glaſs was put round two or three times, while her companion perſuaded her all ſhe could to conſent to her lady's requeſt; ſaying, 'As we came together, let us go toge-'ther, and try our fortunes.' Before the bottle was out, Belinda, unus'd to ſtrong liquor, grew ſomewhat alert, and promis'd to accompany the lady, provided ſhe would be ſo good as to call in Holborn, and deliver her letter; alſo let her friend know where ſhe might come to ſee her. Madam took the billet, read the direction, and told her they ſhould paſs by the door. Accordingly, coaches were call'd, their baggage put into them, their bill diſcharg'd, and the two girls parted, having never ſeen each other ſince.

The better to carry on the deceit, Belinda's miſtreſs called her ſervant, having before, no doubt, given him his leſſon, and told him when they came near the place where that gentlewoman liv'd, to whom miſs's letter was directed, he ſhould ſtop the coach,

coach, and deliver it. As they went up Holborn, the fellow obſerv'd an empty houſe, let them drive a little beyond, then call'd to the coachman to ſtay, while he went on a meſſage to a ſhop hard by. He made ſuch a noiſe at the door as alarm'd the people in the next houſe; who came out, and inform'd him, their neighbours had been remov'd near two months. He then came to the coach window, and told his tale. 'Well, 'Tom, ſays his miſtreſs, we can't help diſ-'appointments of this nature; do you keep 'the letter, and go early in the morning to 'find her out; tell her where miſs lives, and 'that ſhe would be glad to ſee her, as ſoon 'as poſſible.' Belinda returning thanks for the trouble ſhe had given, remain'd perfectly eaſy.

All things hitherto anſwering their wiſhes, and the grand obſtacle remov'd, they drove briskly home; where his miſtreſs ordered Tom to take out the boxes, and conducted her new ſervant into a back parlour to two young girls, not many years above her age; telling her, they were her daughters, and would be her companions; at the ſame time asking which ſhe would chuſe for her bedfellow. Belinda anſwered, 'It is equal to me, 'madam; which ever pleaſes to accept of me, 'or which you think moſt proper.' She reply'd, 'You are the eldeſt, Kitty; I there-'fore recommended her to your care. The

'poor

' poor child, to be ſure, is fatigu'd with her ' journey, and would willingly be in bed. Do ' you ſee her things carried into your room, ' and then come and light her up. I'll or- ' der you a baſon of warm punch up ſtairs, ' or a negus, which you like beſt.' Kitty choſe the former. From this time the other two always called Belinda's miſtreſs, mother.

Soon after Belinda was had up ſtairs to a room well furniſh'd, with a good fire. Kitty left her to get on her night-clothes, while ſhe went to take inſtructions, and bring up the liquor. The poor girl was agreeably ſurpriz'd at this kind uſage, not in the leaſt aware of the conſequence. Kitty comes, they drink up the punch, and go to bed. The firſt thing Belinda enquir'd after, was, what that Segus was, which her miſtreſs offered them, for ſhe never heard of it before. Kitty told her; and ſaid, ' We'll, have ſome to-morrow ' night, to ſee how you like it.' Belinda's heart being open, then told all her ſecrets; what ſtock of money, and other things of value, ſhe brought with her, which ſhe would ſhow her to-morrow. Kitty having got enough for her purpoſe, they fell aſleep. About nine next morning the bell rung. They aroſe, look'd over the treaſure, and Belinda put on another gown, and went to dreſs her miſtreſs. She was very handy; and in about a week, with her miſtreſs's direction,

tion, could dreſs her and the daughters as well as could be expected from a perſon of her age, and a ſtranger to the modes of the town. This week ſhe was employ'd in mending lace, fine linnen, &c. to try her hand, and know what ſhe could do. The beginning of the next, ſhe began to grow more familiar and free in the family than uſual. The Sunday following, while at tea in the afternoon, her miſtreſs enquir'd, if that on her back was the beſt gown ſhe had. She anſwer'd, 'Yes, madam.' The other reply'd, 'It is not good enough, child; my 'daughter Kitty tells me you have both 'money and plate, let me buy you a better 'to-morrow. You ſee we have a great 'number of gentlemen come to viſit us, and 'I would have you appear as well as they. 'It may chance to be for your advantage, 'and you may make your fortune by 'it.'

This civil treatment put the old farmer's ſiſter intirely out of her mind. Her whole confidence was now plac'd in her ſuppoſed lady and the daughters. To them ſhe told her moſt ſecret thoughts, and did nothing without their knowledge. She naturally lov'd money, and out of the preſents at ſeveral times made her by her brother, had ſav'd near five pounds unknown to him; and, as he paid her carriage up, ſhe had above fourteen pounds in her purſe, which

on

on Monday ſhe brought down to her miſtreſs, with the reſt of her riches; who, after having counted the money over, and view'd the plate, ſaid, 'I'm perſuaded, Bell, 'that tea-pot and ring will ſell for as much 'as would buy you a gown, and other ne-'ceſſaries, if you don't care to break ſtock.' Belinda, confounded at this propoſal, and fearing to diſoblige, colour'd, and ſtood ſilent for ſome time; at length ſaid, 'Madam, I 'would not willingly give offence, or run 'counter to your better judgment, but thoſe 'two large ſpoons, and the ring, were my 'dear mamma's, and I have promis'd myſelf 'never to part with them while I live.' This was ſpoke with tears in her eyes. 'Then, child, ſays ſhe, I'll not rob you of 'them; the tea-pot, two little ſpoons, and 'two guineas will do.' All which were immediately given her.

Madam ſends for her mantua-maker to take meaſure of the innocent victim. This done, they both go up ſtairs, rummage the drawers, and find a brocade gown of her's but little worſe for wear, which was order'd to be made fit for her, and the pot and ſpoons laid up in lieu of it. The money provided her other materials, and our new country girl was in a day or two made a lady far more brilliant than any in the houſe. She was now commanded to be dreſs'd out every day before dinner, to come down to tea with them,

them, to keep her daughters and all visitors company, as if she was their equal.

Soon after, she observ'd a young gentleman one evening put his hand into her bedfellow's bosom. At this indecency she rose from her seat, and went out of the room, which greatly surpriz'd his companion, who had been making love to her. He pursued, but in vain. Belinda ran to her own appartment, lock'd herself up, and came no more to them that night. In her absence, Kitty gave them her whole history; when her admirer brib'd Kitty to his interest, and swore he would gain her, or perish in the undertaking; accordingly, calls aloud for the mistress, and enquires the price of her. She pretended conscience, saying, she would have no hand in the affair; nor would encourage any person in so base an action for all the world; tho' but two days before, she had taken twenty guineas præmium of another on the same account. Kitty came late to bed this night, and stole in undiscover'd, for they were each provided with a key for that purpose.

In the morning she ask'd Belinda, how she came to run away so abruptly? Who answer'd, 'I could not bear to see so much 'impudence. Who was that gentleman?' 'He was my sweetheart, said she; and the 'other was yours. I wonder you could leave 'him so. Did you not like him? I think

'he

' he was a pretty young man.' ' Out upon ' them both! reply'd Belinda, I would not ' ſtay with any man that was to make ſo ' free with me. Don't you remember the ' gentleman in the lac'd coat, who ſaluted ' me the other night. He's my favourite; ' he behav'd ſo civilly, that it put me in ' mind of my Damon in the country.' Kitty having thus far pry'd into her inclinations, told the affair to her pretended mother, who order'd an entertainment the ſame evening, and ſent for him; for he was the very perſon of whom ſhe had receiv'd the money before-mention'd. He was made acquainted with the ſecret, and proceeded with the ſame modeſty as before, the more to ingratiate himſelf in her favour.

After ſupper they went to dancing; he took her for his partner, not offering the leaſt indecency, tho' they both ſaw the others allow of many. When they were all warm and weary, they ply'd the punch and negus briskly about, till Belinda found herſelf a little diſorder'd. Hereupon ſhe feign'd illneſs, and deſir'd the gentleman would permit her to go to bed. He inſiſted upon her pledging him in a glaſs of citron-water, and then ſhe ſhould have her liberty. She did ſo, and took leave of the company.

Her gallant ſtaid about an hour with the old bawd, who ſent for the key of her room from her bedfellow, ſhew'd the gentleman to

her, gently open'd the door, and gave it to him, who lock'd himſelf in, and got into bed. The liquor and exerciſe had laid her faſt aſleep, nor was ſhe in the leaſt ſenſible of what had happen'd. I leave the reader to judge of the conſequence.

Next morning Kitty came up ſtairs, when the gentleman was gone, and found her crying in bed. She enquir'd the cauſe; Belinda accus'd her with being acceſſary to her ruin, and ſaid ſhe would not ſtay a minute longer in the houſe. The other endeavour'd to pacify her; bid her not mind it, for ſhe had been ſerv'd in the ſame manner ſeveral times; ſaid ſhe might get a great deal of money out of him, and nobody be the wiſer, if ſhe did not diſcover herſelf.

During this diſcourſe, the bell rung for Belinda to go to her miſtreſs. She begg'd the other to go, and tell her ſhe was not well. The old bawd comes up, hears her ſtory, and laughing ſays, 'Don't be uneaſy, my 'girl, nor torment thyſelf about it, I like 'you ne'er the worſe. He has done you no 'harm. It may prove the beſt night's work 'you ever made in your life; for he has a 'great eſtate, and no doubt will provide for 'you. Get up inſtantly, and go about your 'buſineſs as uſual, or we'll pull you out of 'bed.'

Belinda, finding there was no hopes of indulging melancholy, roſe immediately. They made

made her put on clean linnen, and dreſs out in her beſt clothes, then went together down ſtairs. She had not been there half an hour before her gallant came in, made her a preſent of a pair of ear-rings, a necklace and ſolitaire; ſtaid with her all the evening, that night, and the three following. At parting he gave her ſome money, told her pretended miſtreſs ſhe ſhould be a ſervant no longer, but a boarder, and paid a month's board before hand; telling her, he would return again before that time was expir'd. During his abſence, ſhe became the object of admiration and love of all comers; and what ſhe had before loſt, was ſold a hundred times over.

Belinda was here kept conceal'd, and forced to continue this way of life near two years; and had, in all probability, continu'd in this wicked courſe during life, if an accident, which may hereafter come to light, had not diſcover'd the affair, and procur'd her enlargement. She has ſince had the good fortune to get into an agreeable ſervice, behaves well, and to the ſatisfaction of her miſtreſs; and, in all likelihood, will become a new creature, being but juſt turn'd of ſeventeen —— A rare inſtance of latent virtue!

F I N I S.

LIMIS